

**December 14, 2009**

**WASHINGTON, DC** - U.S. Rep. Michael Arcuri (NY-24) announced today that he has successfully secured \$300,000 for the Northern Forest Explorers Program for Youth in Old Forge.

"Providing young people with the opportunity to explore our environment and gain firsthand experience in conservation is vital," **Arcuri said**. "I have so many fond memories from my youth of summers in the Adirondacks and I hope that this funding will allow our area youth to get out in nature and be active, while developing their leadership abilities and gaining invaluable knowledge and life skills."

This funding will be used to expand the existing program that engages rural youth ages 10-14 in outdoor experiences designed to encourage active lifestyles and develop leadership skills. Participants spend one week paddling on the water trail in their local area and learning camping and group skills that will be the basis for a lifetime of recreational involvement. In addition, participants become gain extensive knowledge of Leave No Trace ethics and basic ecosystem studies.

Expert local guides lead the trips, supported by training and curriculum from regional outdoor education partners. The program will expand a successful rural youth outdoor education program from three schools in western Maine to communities across the entire Northern Forest Canoe Trail, which begins in Old Forge. These funds will expand the program along the entirety of the trail route across New York, Vermont, New Hampshire, and Maine - with approximately one-third of the funding planned for New York State.

The funding secured by Arcuri for The Northern Forest Explorers is included in the Fiscal Year 2010 Omnibus Appropriations Act, which passed the House of Representatives on Thursday by a vote of 221-202 and passed the Senate on Saturday. The bill will now proceed to the President for his final signature.

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